

**June
2004**



Mayors Create Healthy Communities

The **2003** New Jersey Mayors' Institute
on Community Design

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

1

Program Structure

2

Case Studies

4

Paterson City

8

Princeton

10

Maplewood

12

River Vale

14

Washington

16

Metuchen

18

New Jersey Committee

Henry A. Augenblick
Philip Beachem
Fred M. Brody
Brant B. Cali
John Ciaffone
John Bloomfield
Timothy Comerford
Carol C. Cronheim
Clive S. Cummis
Christopher J. Daggett
Jerry Fitzgerald English
Zulima V. Farber
Hon. James J. Florio
Urs P. Gauchat
Robert L. Geddes
Robert S. Goldsmith
George Hampton
Charles E. "Sandy" Hance
Henry F. Henderson, Jr.
Pamela Hersh
J. Robert Hillier, FAIA
Deborah Hoffman
James Hsu
Arthur E. Imperatore, Jr.
Barbara E. Kauffman
Susan S. Lederman
Richard C. Leone
Richard W. Lloyd
Joseph J. Maraziti, Jr.
Anthony L. Marchetta
Theresa Marshall
Eileen McGinnis
Sean T. Monaghan
Maureen Ogden
Christopher J. Paladino
Jeffrey M. Pollock
Lee Porter
Ingrid W. Reed
Donald Richardson
Ronald Slember
Jeffrey A. Warsh
Elnardo J. Webster, II
Melanie Willoughby

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Regional Plan Association is an independent, non-profit regional planning organization that improves the quality of life and the economic competitiveness of the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut region through research, planning and advocacy. For more than 80 years, RPA has been shaping transportation systems, protecting open spaces and promoting better community design for the region's continued growth. We anticipate the challenges the region will face in the years to come, and we mobilize the region's civic, business and government sectors to take action.

Project staff

Thomas G. Dallessio, AICP/PP, NJ Director, RPA
Robert Lane, Director, Regional Design Programs, RPA
Thomas K. Wright, Executive Vice President, RPA
Sasha Corchado, Assistant to the NJ Director, RPA
Carlos Rodrigues, AICP/PP, Implementation Manager, NJ Office of Smart Growth

The New Jersey Mayors' Institute on Community Design is a program organized by RPA with the assistance of the N.J. Office of Smart Growth (OSG) to promote and implement better design and planning in communities throughout New Jersey.

Major funders include the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs. Additional support was received from the N.J. State League of Municipalities; Princeton University; N.J. Chapter of the American Planning Association; and the Mayors' Institute Partnership: the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA); the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the American Architectural Foundation.

The 2003 Mayors' Institutes were also made possible by the participation and support of a

number of individuals. Special thanks to the 12 mayors and their staffs for their time, attention and interest; M. Katherine Kraft and Marco Navarro from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; Susan Bass Levin and Marge DellaVecchia from the N.J. Department of Community Affairs (DCA); Stan Allen, Blanche Scioli, Pamela Hersh, Karen Jezierny, Cynthia Nelson, and Tracey Story from Princeton University; Adam Zellner, Robin Murray, Theresa Oros, Ken Snapp and Vivian Baker from New Jersey Transit, and Wendy McVicker from the N.J. Office of Smart Growth (OSG). Also, thanks to RPA staff members Jeremy Soffin and Jeff Ferzoco for contributing to this report.

Also, special thanks to the Mayors' Institute and Pilot Project resource teams:

Mayors' Institute Resource Team

Brent C. Barnes, Director of Transportation Systems Planning at NJDOT; Jonathan Barnett, Professor of City and Regional Planning, University of Pennsylvania; Hillary Brown, Principal, New Civic Works; Robert Brown, Brown & Keener Urban Design; Colin Cathcart, Kiss & Cathcart Architects; Patrick Condon, James Taylor Chair in Landscapes and Livable Environments at the University of British Columbia; Dr. Reid Ewing, Voorhees Transportation Institute at Rutgers University; Michael B. Francois, Managing Director – Real Estate, NJEDA; Urs Gauchat, Dean, NJIT School of Architecture; Jan Gehl, Partner, Gehl Architects; Gerald Giosa, Wiley Engineering, PC; Dr. Richard Jackson, Center for Disease Control (CDC); Anthony Marchetta, Vice President, LCOR, Inc.; Sharon Roerty, Senior Project Coordinator, Voorhees Institute at Rutgers University; and Pratap Talwar, Thompson Design Group.

Pilot Project Resource Team

Carlos Rodrigues, Plan Implementation Manager, NJ Office of Smart Growth; William Riviere, Senior Planner, NJ Department of Transportation (DOT); Leigh Ann Von Hagen, Senior Planner, William Feldman, Senior Planner, and Denise Chaplick, Senior Planner, The RBA Group; Gary Toth, NJ Department of Transportation; Julie Seaman, NJ Department of Transportation; Sharon Roerty, Senior Project Coordinator, Voorhees Transportation Policy Institute. We thank all of the local officials and residents who participated in the two charrettes.

Collingswood
20
Lindenwold
22
Tinton Falls
24

Lumberton
26
Montgomery
28
West Amwell
30

Princeton Pilot
32
River Vale Pilot
34

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Modeled on the national Mayors' Institute on City Design, the New Jersey Mayors' Institute provides a multi-day retreat for six to eight mayors and a resource team of design and planning professionals. The mayors present planning and design issues that each community is facing, and then participate in a wide-ranging discussion. While addressing the specific concerns raised by the mayors, the resource team members also describe in broader terms how they have approached similar problems. Using examples from other communities, the mayors and resource team members learn from each other.

The Mayors' Institute offers public officials the rare opportunity to discuss a planning issue facing their community with a group of peers and some of the most respected designers and planners in the country. These Institutes focus particular attention on the relationship between community planning and public health, and how better design and development can create healthy, livable communities. Experts in public health participate in the Institute discussions, providing presentations and analyses of how alternative development patterns impact the health of communities.

In 2003, two Institutes were held at Princeton University: January 29-31 and June 8-10. These Institutes focused particular attention on the relationship between community planning and public health, and how better design and development can create healthy, livable communities. Experts in public health participated in the Institute discussions, providing presentations and analyses of how alternative development patterns impact the health of communities.

The Mayors

To date, mayors from thirty-two municipalities throughout New Jersey have participated in the program. These communities are: Asbury Park, Bordentown, Burlington City, Collingswood, Commercial, East Orange, Greenwich, Hackensack, Highland Park, Hightstown, Hope, Lambertville, Lindenwold, Lumberton, Maplewood, Metuchen, Montgomery, Old Bridge, Paterson, Plainfield, Pleasantville, Princeton Township, Red Bank, River Vale, South Amboy, South Bound Brook, Stafford, Tinton Falls, Vineland, Washington Township (Bergen County), West Amwell, and West Windsor.

2003 N.J. Mayoral Participants

Hon. M. James Maley, Jr., Collingswood Borough
Hon. Victor De Luca, Maplewood Township
Hon. Edmund O'Brien, Metuchen Borough
Hon. Louise Wilson, Montgomery Township
Hon. Jose "Joey" Torres, Paterson City
Hon. Ann Y. McNamara, Tinton Falls Borough
Hon. Frank DeLuca, Jr., Lindenwold Borough
Hon. Preston M. Taylor, Jr., Lumberton Township
Hon. Phyllis L. Marchand, Princeton Township
Hon. George Paschalis, River Vale Township
Hon. Rudolph J. Wenzel, Jr.,
Washington Township (Bergen County)
Hon. Peter A. Buchsbaum, West Amwell Township

Case Studies

The twelve case studies presented by the mayors were organized into the following categories, which are described in greater detail further in this report:

- making connections;
- creating mixed-use centers;
- promoting transit opportunities;
- building complete neighborhoods; and
- meeting urban design challenges in rural communities.

The most basic lesson for the mayors is to think beyond the confines of their problem, beyond the boundaries of the individual development sites or problem areas to the larger neighborhood or community planning framework. This emphasis on making connections – physical and programmatic – to the larger context is also a fundamental precept of healthy community design.

Resource Team Presentations

Each Institute begins with presentations by members of the resource team. These presentations introduce the mayors to the concepts of community design, educate them in the tools employed by professional planners, and frame the subsequent discussion.

In January 2003, Carlos Rodrigues from the New Jersey Office of Smart Growth presented "Designing New Jersey," a state publication which explores the importance of design in creating public spaces, promoting pedestrian activity, and creating compact communities. At the June 2003 Institute, Dr. Jonathan Barnett, Professor of City and Regional Planning at the University of Pennsylvania, walked may-

ors through the history of urban design and the potential future of better planning.

Other resource team presentations highlighted specific areas, including economic development, landscaping and green infrastructure, and state assistance. Employing the adage that “a picture is worth a thousand words,” resource team members Tony Marchetta from LCOR Development Corporation and Hillary Brown from New Civic Works cited smart growth examples from around the country and throughout the world to encourage more compact, mixed-use development and sustainable design techniques. Michael Francois from the New Jersey Economic Development Authority explained how economic development is done, and how projects evolve over time to gain access to state support. Other presentations introduced a range of innovative ideas, including a redevelopment plan where a new school facility was financed by adding adjacent housing; a higher density development near mass transit that was designed with a lower parking requirement and few school children; and green building and parking lot designs that conserve natural resources.

These Institutes had a particular focus on creating healthy communities by exploring the relationship between public health and the built environment. Resource team member Dr. Richard Jackson from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention brought forth the message that rising rates of diabetes and obesity could be attributed, in part, to a lack of physical activity. One way to address this epidemic could be to design new development to enable children and adults to walk, bike or recreate as part of their normal daily activities. Dr. Reid Ewing, formerly with the Voorhees Transportation Policy Institute at Rutgers University, provided images of physical improvements to streets, sidewalks, intersections and other crossings to calm traffic and provide greater safety to pedestrians.

Keynote Addresses

The keynote address at each Institute, the highlight of the program, is delivered by a distinguished figure in the field of planning and design. Open to the public, it draws a wide audience of elected officials, business leaders, civic activists, experts and the media, in addition to the Institute’s participants and resource team. Its goal is to introduce the mayors to the best community design practices in the world.

In January, Dr. Jan Gehl, Partner with Gehl Architects and Director of the Center for Public Space Research at the School of

Architecture, Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen, Denmark, spoke of “The Human Dimension in City Planning.” Dr. Gehl, who has written widely on city design and has been central to the development of many of the acclaimed public spaces in Copenhagen, showed how public life can be an asset for a community, and challenged the mayors to consider the kind of image the community wants to project. His comments focused on the simple steps and big actions that mayors can take to increase pedestrian and bicycle activity, as well as economic development and quality of life in the community.

In June, former Maryland Governor Parris Glendening recounted how he was able to promote smart growth and a higher quality of life in his state by making clear where growth should and should not occur. State funding and other incentives were provided to projects and developments located in “priority areas” according to the Governor, who made clear that construction outside of these places would be financed entirely without State assistance. His efforts to rebuild cities and towns, and preserve open space and farmland, have been adopted in other places across the country as a new model for better planning. Governor Glendening cautioned the mayors that time was not on their side. He urged them to invest in smart growth projects that will accommodate growth and improve the quality of life for all.

Demonstration Projects

Following the two Institutes, RPA and OSG initiated pilot projects in November in Princeton Township and River Vale Township, conducting day-long charrettes with the mayors, other officials and staff, the RBA Group, and planners from the State and Rutgers University to identify ways to improve pedestrian and bicycle movement throughout the case study area. In the case of Princeton Township, the challenge was to improve connections to the Princeton Shopping Center from the Township Municipal Building, neighboring schools and recreational facilities. In River Vale, the Four Corners area provided the focal point for intersection improvements that could influence land use redevelopment plans (and vice versa).

CASE STUDIES:

BACKGROUND

Then and Now

The disciplines of urban planning and public health have common origins. More than a century ago came the recognition that the design and management of cities had a direct relationship with the public health concerns of American city-dwellers. At that time, widespread epidemics of dysentery were caused by sewage contamination of the water supply. In addition, poverty and close living quarters fostered tuberculosis. Coal smoke and particulates blocked the sunlight necessary for the synthesis of vitamin D in skin. As a result, over 20% of urban children had rickets.

As early as 1870, in his essay *Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns*, pioneer urban and park planner Frederick Law Olmsted identified the strong link between good public health and community design, opportunities for exercise and access to fresh air and sunlight. Olmsted built these attributes into his plans for New York's Central Park, Atlanta's Piedmont Park and dozens of other urban park systems across the country. Later, the urban planning and public health professions developed around efforts to reduce the incidence of these diseases through the principles of improved planning, design and management of America's urban communities.

That was then. Now obesity is epidemic in the United States. More than 50% of U.S. adults are overweight. Furthermore, 22% of the U.S. adult population is obese, equivalent to approximately 30 pounds overweight. Obesity is not simply a cosmetic disorder. Approximately 60% of overweight 5-to-10-year-old children already have one associated biochemical or clinical cardiovascular risk factor, or elevated blood pressure or insulin levels, and 25% have two.

The risk factors observed in children will become chronic diseases in adults. Almost 80% of obese adults have diabetes, high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure, coronary artery disease, gall bladder disease or osteoarthritis, and almost 40% have two or more. Only smoking exceeds obesity in its contribution to total mortality rates in the United States. A recent estimate that the direct and indirect costs of obesity in the United States approximated 10% of the national health care budget underscores why we can no longer afford to ignore obesity as a major medical problem in this country.

Although the behaviors related to food intake that contribute to the epidemic remain unclear, data from children have demonstrated an apparently causal relationship between sedentary behavior and the onset and persistence of obesity. Furthermore, although physical activity may not substantially improve rates of weight loss among the obese, activity appears to improve many of the diseases associated with obesity, such as diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular disease. These observations suggest that the most effective approach to begin to control the obesity epidemic and its adverse effects is to promote physical activity.

However, until now there has been little serious attention paid to the relationship between public health and the societal shift to suburban low density, automobile-oriented settlement patterns over the past fifty years.

Today, most people live in low-density environments and are largely reliant on automobiles for their mobility. The use of the automobile requires little physical activity and burns few calories. Transit, on the other hand, requires walking at both ends of a trip, and it often involves stair-climbing and additional walking to access goods and services.

It is reasonable to believe that the shift from transit toward driving to carry out daily activities is a plausible factor in the health of our citizens. The link between the relative use of various modes of transportation and land use patterns is well known, and it is therefore rational to conclude that there is a cause-effect connection between land use patterns and obesity.

Can Planners and Developers Help Fill a Prescription for Public Health and Accommodate Growth at the Same Time?

The Census Bureau forecasts that the nation's population will grow by 60 million by 2020 – which would be the equivalent of adding two states with the population and service demand of California. This growth will require the construction of approximately 1 million new housing units per year for the next two decades.

While the New York metropolitan region is expected to grow at a slower rate, it will add two million new residents by 2020, a 10% increase over current levels. In New Jersey, it is projected that a million more people and almost a million new jobs will be created by 2020. During this same period, the region's economy could

grow by as much as a third, creating greater buying power and a higher standard of living. However, growing highway congestion in New York and other metropolitan regions could severely constrain forecasted growth. For this reason, RPA's Third Regional Plan concluded that the region's capacity for growth and its quality of life will be best served by focusing development in New York City and other transit- and pedestrian-oriented centers. This growth will require that the region's transit system, already the nation's largest, be modernized and expanded.

Many suburban centers lack the concentration and mix of activities to support any mode of transportation other than single-occupant vehicles. At the same time, most suburban centers contain extensive but isolated undeveloped, abandoned or underutilized parcels of land. Promoting reuse of these areas with infill development is the key to achieving more compact pedestrian and transit-oriented development patterns.

Only 30% of children who live within a mile of school walk to school. Although 25% of all trips are less than one mile, 75% of these trips are by car. To have a significant impact on public health, the goal must be to increase personal activity rates on a daily basis:

- Travel to school and work should be a regular, daily activity.
- Travel to shopping and recreational features should be a regular, weekly activity.

Many communities in our region do not have enough open space opportunities per capita. At the same time, heavily trafficked roadways and neighborhood land use patterns render some spaces underutilized. There is a growing and distinct lack of connection between where we live, work and play.

- Parks, gardens and neighborhood greenways can play an important role in connecting isolated communities and encouraging physical activity levels to rise.

The extent of growth to be accommodated both in the nation and in the New York region, combined with the strong groundswell of interest in smarter patterns of development, create a unique opportunity to plan, build and rebuild communities that are conducive to healthier, more active lifestyles. In short, smart growth is healthier growth. RPA has calculated that failure to promote these new patterns of growth and mobility could constrict

expansion of the New York region's economy by hundreds of billions of dollars annually by 2020. It can be expected that similar outcomes would be experienced in other regions across the country.

The New Jersey Mayors' Institute brought together municipal leaders and planning and design experts to tackle these difficult development problems. At the Institute, mayors learned that community design could be used in many cases to address development issues and create healthier communities. Promoting development in mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented centers, remaking the suburban landscape to reduce auto dependency and designing transit-supportive development is a rational, sustainable strategy that accommodates growth in a smart way and at the same time promotes active, healthy lifestyles. The mayors who took the time to participate in each Institute can make the legitimate claim that they are advocates not only for smart growth, but for the health of their constituents.

CASE STUDIES: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Making Connections

In the broadest sense, the concept of healthy communities embodies the most fundamental of urban design principles: the need to establish a relationship to context, to make connections – physical and programmatic – to a larger setting.

The physical connections – the new sidewalks, connecting streets, greenways – are not just physical relationships but ways of promoting alternative forms of mobility – the biking and walking that are fundamental to active community design.

Programmatic connections are equally important – demonstrating the ways in which single-purpose facilities can be used by different constituencies at different times of the day – mixed-use in time as well as space. Urban design and healthy community goals share a reliance on new and unorthodox partnerships which are the key to the complex implementation strategies needed to bring them about.

The fundamental lesson the mayors learned from the Institute is that they should think beyond the confines of their concrete problem, beyond the boundaries of the individual development sites or problems, and on to the larger neighborhood or community planning framework.

Paterson: What was presented as an adaptive reuse study for an abandoned high school stadium became a study in how to make the stadium the centerpiece of a larger greenway circuit around the Passaic River, a greenway that in turn enabled new connections into the surrounding neighborhoods. In addition, the mayor was encouraged to think of the rebuilt stadium not as a “sports complex” – with its single use, single constituent connotations

– but as a community facility capable of delivering a variety of services at different times of the day.

Princeton Shopping Center case study raised similar issues about the potential ability of a single large redevelopment site to function as the mixed use center of a larger community, and the ability to create pedestrian and bicycle connections not only to the surrounding neighborhoods but to several other roads in this highly connected street grid and walkable environment.

Creating Mixed-Use Centers

Another related urban design theme that is also a principle-precept of healthy community design is the creation of mixed-use centers – again, mixed-use broadly conceived in time and space – and the connections from these centers to surrounding neighborhoods.

Maplewood The Institute demonstrated how the redevelopment of a key gateway into the borough at the site of a library and park could be made a redevelopment site using infill housing in order to create and bring life at different times of the day to a marginal part of the borough. The design studies also demonstrated how to connect this area to several other key parcels and to a larger bikeway and greenway network funded by the Robert Wood Johnson foundation.

River Vale and Washington Township

case studies raised similar issues about the ability to link resources in ways that create complete centers for larger communities. In River Vale, as in Maplewood, the focus was on mixed-use infill development and on creating a complete pedestrian network. A senior housing complex near the crossroads of this future center raises the issue of how to create an active environment for this population which, if the design enables it, will walk to shop and get services. In Washington Township, there was less emphasis on redevelopment but more attention paid to how several proximate but disconnected destinations – a post office, library, shopping center and park – can become less automobile oriented and more walkable.

Promoting Transit Opportunities

The promotion/exploration of transit opportunities as a way of reducing dependence on the automobile is another place where the urban design and healthy communities agendas are aligned.

Metuchen and Collingswood The Institute focused on transit-friendly design strategies that created new linkages from the rail station to the larger context and showed how new development near the train station could support transit use. Interestingly, in both case studies, and for Metuchen in particular, the challenge was to find creative ways of managing the parking – of substituting walkable mixed-use environments for an undifferentiated sea of parking. Also, for both cases there were opportunities to link the station area to a larger greenway system to promote biking and walking to transit. In Metuchen, linkages were made to a larger walking circuit designed and implemented through funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Lindenwold case study presented a similar challenge – how to transform an auto-oriented edge city into a walkable environment with pedestrian connections to several neighborhoods.

Building Complete Neighborhoods

The case studies at the Mayors' Institute also focus on how we build residential neighborhoods, a fundamental feature of the healthy communities landscape. Single purpose residential developments, designed around cul-de-sacs and with few points of entry, increase our reliance on the automobile, not just for purpose trips – to shop, to work – but for social interaction.

Tinton Falls The Institute created a framework for transforming such a place by building new greenway connections around the perimeter and by describing how a large office development parcel nearby could be reconceived to create a more mixed-use place that linked directly to the residential subdivisions.

Lumberton case study presented similar opportunities. Here, new roadway connections have the potential to link several isolated residential areas to each other, to another future subdivision and to a commercial corridor that itself can be transformed from an auto-oriented strip to a walkable shopping and community service destination.

Linking Urban Design and Rural Communities

Finally, several of the case studies at the Mayors' Institute are in rural environments where the urban design and healthy communities agenda are less clearly linked. These are often lower density places where the walkable or bikable destinations are farther afield. However, even here, the healthy communities agenda is apparent particularly in meeting the challenges of auto dependency and neighborhood design.

Montgomery Township, a formerly rural community experiencing suburban growth, is characterized by the kind of disconnected cul-de-sac and loop wound gated subdivisions so strongly associated with “sprawl.” The Institute demonstrated how the next several cycles of subdivision activity in a strategic part of town could build linkages to an older neighborhood and to a small scale commercial area that actually did have the potential to become a “center.” However these connections would only be possible if the Township defeated a typical roadway widening and intersection improvement project that prioritized traffic movement over community building. Subsequent to the Institute, the Township has requested that NJDOT rethink this roadway project.

West Amwell presented a similar challenge and asked a related question – can sprawling residential development be redirected and concentrated in a smaller area to create a well connected walkable environment?

CASE STUDIES

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS





PATERSON CITY

Mayor Jose “Joey” Torres
Passaic County

1

Square Miles 8.6
Population (2000) 149,222



KEY QUESTIONS

What uses should be considered for the underutilized industrial buildings along Totowa Avenue, Ryle Avenue and Ryle Road?

How should new development accommodate the extraordinary topography and natural features of this area?

How can this project promote redevelopment of the surrounding neighborhoods?

From a healthy communities perspective, how can the redevelopment opportunities in this area be linked to the larger greenway plan for the city?

PROBLEM STATEMENT Outline a planning and urban design framework for the Cliffside neighborhood that links the school and stadium redevelopment project to the surrounding neighborhoods and to the industrial areas along the Passaic River.

This case study builds on an initiative already underway – to link a neighborhood school to the restoration and re-programming of a now abandoned and neglected 9000-seat football and track stadium. Both the school and the stadium are situated on an extraordinary promontory, adjacent to the Paterson Falls and overlooking the city of Paterson. The “healthy communities” agenda is manifest in a number of obvious ways – from the idea of a sports business center to the bikeways and walkways that will be part of a completed Passaic River Greenway. The challenge is to link these opportunities to the surrounding neighborhoods and to insure that they inform the future redevelopment opportunities.

RESOURCE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

The larger area around the Passaic River Greenway – the many open spaces, historic buildings and redevelopment opportunities – should be conceived as a kind of Central Park that organizes the many disparate parts into an imageable whole.

The redevelopment concept builds on current thinking about all the school facilities in Paterson – that their charge must be expanded beyond simply providing a highly supervised environment from 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. during which students are taught a conventional core curriculum. Instead,

the schools are intended to become community resources in the broadest sense, replacing the conventional concept of curriculum (the “three R’s”) with an agenda that includes integration with the life of the community, including both immediate needs (daycare, healthcare) and new employment opportunities in industrial growth sectors. In this case, the concept is to reprogram the stadium as a Sports Business Academy.

The old mills and buildings are a valuable resource, and the city can avoid “school sprawl” of large regional facilities by supporting neighborhood-based schools. There are many opportunities to create housing, recreation and economic development that can attract attention beyond the city. Focusing on the river and the falls as jewels, as well as concentrating investments to connect these resources to school improvements, are important to the city’s revitalization.

The low and high areas around the Falls can attract different types of users, and the city should identify the potential users of recreation space. A program for the area can identify anchors beyond the stadium and nodes at critical distances, and create an envelope of public and private spaces. The national park in Lowell, Massachusetts, is a precedent, as is the idea of a “Tavern on the Green” at the stadium site.



SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Expand open space rather than development near the Falls.

Create new edge for stadium to link stadium, neighborhood and park.

Redevelop level area for mixed use.

Develop connections to neighborhood.



- Intensify residential development and relocate industrial uses.
- Make the owner of the island a development partner.

Create new system of "Carriageways" throughout the park.

Create a link to the island.

New mixed-use development in old industrial buildings.



PRINCETON TOWNSHIP

Mayor Phyllis L. Marchand
Mercer County



2

KEY QUESTIONS

What new buildings and uses can the site support and how should these be placed on the site?

What is the appropriate scale and treatment for the edges of the site, where the PSC interfaces with the surrounding neighborhood?

What types of connections, especially for pedestrians and cyclists, can be developed from the redeveloped shopping center to the rest of the Township and to Princeton Borough?

How should the vacant 6-acre parcel to the north of the shopping center be developed?

How can the automobile continue to be accommodated if the site is intensified?

How can redevelopment of the PSC improve the appearance of Harrison Street and lead to further redevelopment along this corridor?

PROBLEM STATEMENT Propose an urban design framework for the Princeton Shopping Center (PSC) and immediate environs that enables new mixed-use development and encourages additional redevelopment in appropriate locations but preserves the essential character of the original shopping center and respects the scale and character of the surrounding neighborhoods.

The Princeton Shopping Center, although well-used and successful by many measures, is a prime candidate for redevelopment. Through the redevelopment of existing buildings, as well as new construction in key locations, the Princeton Shopping Center could serve as a magnet for bicycle and pedestrian activity, as well as the core of the “little town.”

RESOURCE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Creating what Princeton Township Mayor Phyllis Marchand called “a little town” requires rethinking of the shopping center, as well as the connections to and within the center. Working with landowners and residents to build new pedestrian and bicycle connections, as well as new development that improves their quality of life, will be a challenge. With new design guidelines, strategic infrastructure investments, and a vision for a more people-oriented shopping center, this project could transform over time

into the “little town” desired by the mayor and others. Residential units and office space, served by parking garages that respect the neighborhood and create visual interest could be additions that would increase the value of the center as well as meet the future needs of this neighborhood.

Redesigning the entrances to the Princeton Shopping Center, as well as paths to neighborhood parks and schools will be most important. Traffic calming of Harrison Street, as well as the center’s internal circulation, is a viable solution. Looking at interior streets as bikeways as well as pedestrian paths to be shared with vehicles requires a new design. Creating linkages to neighborhood schools and recreational facilities through strategic investments and coordinated planning and development review can lead to more pedestrian and bicycle movement.

Central to the implementation strategy in Princeton Township is the need to create the vision best described by the mayor: a village with 2–3 storied buildings and upstairs living and offices.

Note: This project is one of two pilot implementation projects discussed at the back of this report.



SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Create greenway connections to open space on north side of property.

Connect to municipal complex at Witherspoon Street.

Pedestrian and streetscape improvements on Harrison Street.

New housing around perimeter of shopping center.

Link open spaces in shopping center to surrounding neighborhoods.

Connection to school.



FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Work with landowners/developers to:

- Encourage structured parking to free up land for development or recreation.
- Use new financing tools to increase land value.
- Phase redevelopment.
- Rim Shopping Center with housing, giving residents a street address.
- Create walkable streets throughout

the Center.

Create new design guidelines:

- 200 foot blocks of mixed-use development to shorten distance between intersections and encourage walking.
- Retain open space connections.
- Use streams as a natural resource connection to Harrison Street shops and Center shops.

- Consider shuttle or other connections to downtown Princeton and the Dinky train.



MAPLEWOOD TOWNSHIP

Mayor Victor De Luca
Essex County

Square Miles 3.85
Population 23,868



3

KEY QUESTIONS

How should the bike-way network relate to Springfield Avenue, to Maplecree Park and to the Library?

What is the appropriate scale and configuration for the various redevelopment opportunities along Springfield Avenue?

What improvements can be made in the neighborhood south of Springfield Avenue that will better link this neighborhood to Springfield Avenue and to other community resources?

What new uses can consolidate the role of this place as a civic node and urban gateway?

PROBLEM STATEMENT Create a design framework for a new pedestrian-oriented gateway at the Hilton branch library site on Springfield Avenue, and in so doing, create linkages across Springfield Avenue and to the larger Maplewood bikeway network.

The present challenge is to counter the trends that could lead to the creation of two Maplewoods – an affluent, largely white middle class Maplewood to the north and a less well off, largely minority Maplewood to the south, proximate to Irvington and Union. In this scenario, Springfield Avenue, once the commercial spine and “Main Street” of the Township becomes the great divide rather than a unifying seam between diverse neighborhoods. The Township is actively trying to create racial balance by encouraging new arrivals – particularly first time homeowners, gays and artists – to this neighborhood, as well as creating a bikeway linking the various neighborhoods, open spaces and community resources in the Township. The bike-way project has received support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation as an implementation project to create more healthy lifestyles through better community design.

RESOURCE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS New infill development at this end of Springfield Avenue should be used to create a gateway to Maplewood and should help create linkages to the several larger redevelopment opportunities. In addition, Springfield Avenue itself should be the focus of several improvements including the bikeway project, a streetscape improvement program, detailed design standards and the Special Improvement District designation for the corridor.

Perhaps the most important dimension of the bikeway project is its role in promoting physical activity and community health. But, there are several other significant dimensions to the bikeway: it will provide an alternative form of mobility, and reanimate a little known aspect of Maplewood’s history – its importance as a center for bicycling in the early 1900s and the site for the annual Tour of Maplewood bike race. Most importantly, the bikeway will also have symbolic

significance as a link not only between the physical resources of the Township but also between Maplewood’s diverse communities, on both sides of Springfield Avenue. As such, the intersection of the bikeway and Springfield Avenue in the primary study area is especially significant. Connections should also be made from Springfield Avenue to the redevelopment sites to the north.

The Resource Team envisioned the opportunity to redesign streets to break down barriers discouraging pedestrian travel and to encourage new neighborhood-style housing and retail. While much of the commercial uses along Springfield Avenue are marginal, the team challenged the mayor to look at site-specific questions related to a potential church and a car dealership as “opportunities” rather than obstacles. The open space square was determined to be the core of the area and the connection to the town center, with pedestrians and bicyclists using this area as potential consumers for nearby shops and housing. The team recommended that the mayor consider climate conditions, and utilize sunny areas for recreation and retail/restaurant opportunities.

Springfield Avenue could become a greenway connecting the park to the neighborhood by closing the side road and redesigning the street to move cars at a slower pace. It could also be a “trolley car” arterial, where higher density housing could meet market demands and create incentives for first floor retail. However, everyone recognized that constituent support was necessary for densification, and that it would need to be a gradual process. Consideration could be given to developing the parkland for more active uses, such as a skate park or other non-field activities, as ways to accommodate more growth and make it more acceptable as part of a complete community.

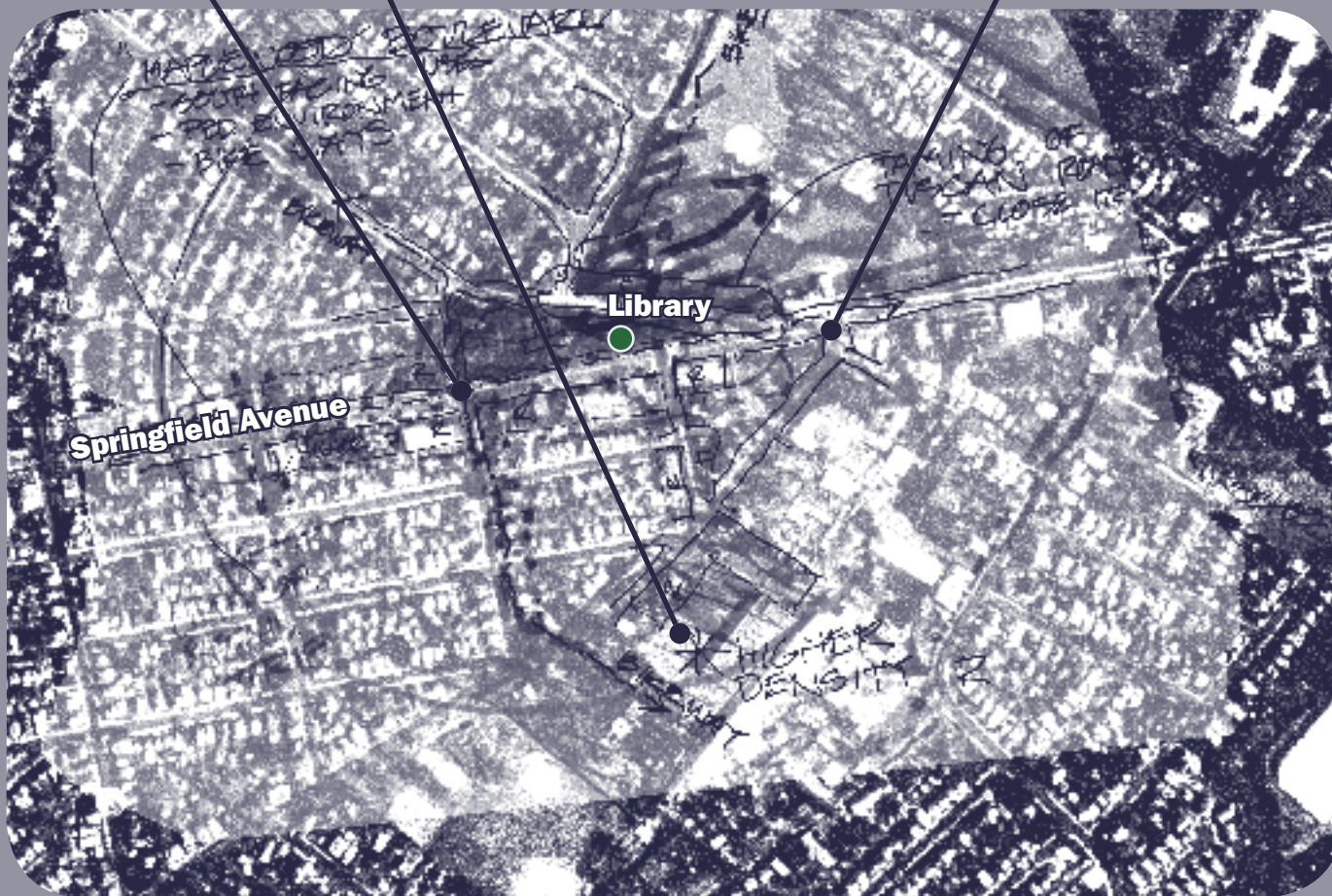


SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

"Maplewood Boulevard" should become a stadium environment, bikeways, and a streetscape.

Link to higher density housing at development site.

Promote new mixed-use development on several blocks in gateway area.



FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

- Focus attention on a small area "Maplewood Boulevard."
- Consider the strategic role of the southern parcel in promoting redevelopment and neighborhood connections.
- Beef-up the residential component of development.
- Recognize the library as the centerpiece of a valuable public place.
- Hire an economic consultant to determine development possibilities.



RIVER VALE TOWNSHIP

Mayor George Paschalis
Bergen County

Square Miles 4.31
Population 9,449

4

KEY QUESTIONS

How can parking be accommodated in a more rational way?

What is the appropriate scale massing and placement of future buildings in the village center?

What connections can be made from the village center to the surrounding neighborhoods and resources?

What mix of uses is appropriate here?

PROBLEM STATEMENT Describe the configuration of a true village center for what is now an auto-oriented “four-corners.”

RESOURCE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Redesigning and reconfiguring this auto-oriented area into a pedestrian-friendly village center will require connections to adjacent and surrounding neighborhoods, improvements to the two high-volume county roads, infill opportunities and restructured parking. More important, however, is a vision for the Four Corners, which could include a community-oriented public square, a pedestrian-friendly downtown district, sustainable retail and pocket parks in the center.

Remaking the Four Corners as a community-oriented downtown, complete with a new park and enhanced retail and residential development will require redesigning connections to existing and new development. Moving auto traffic while encouraging increased pedestrian and bicycle movement will involve intersection improvements, other context-sensitive design roadwork, streetscape improvements and design guidelines that encourage paths and other link-

ages beyond traditional auto access. Connecting the new assisted living center on one side of the intersection and a pharmacy on the other provide opportunities to encourage walking and biking rather than driving to run errands.

Construction of the assisted living facility, along with the redevelopment of a strip shopping center and the potential for higher value development and infill at the intersections, creates the mass necessary to transform Four Corners. River Vale can strengthen these private development proposals with public investments such as a commitment from Bergen County to improve the intersection and a Green Acres grant to purchase a pocket park. Four Corners should also be the site for infill development that returns the area to two story buildings, restricts on-site parking to behind the buildings, establishes second floor residential units and consolidates the shopping center and under-utilized properties.

Note: This project is one of two pilot implementation projects discussed at the back of this report

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Comprehensive streetscape/street landscaping.

Rationalize and reorganize left-over spaces and parking lots.

Establish a "build-to" line for new buildings.

Insure pedestrian orientation of new intersection. Provide amenities for transit stop.

Potential green-way connection to other destinations.

Link to new extended care housing.



FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Create a redevelopment plan, to articulate a vision for the area. Elements of the plan may include:

- Set-back zoning that creates usable urban space.
- Start a tree planting program.
- New sidewalks adjacent to stores.
- Controlled on-site parking.
- Establish a special redevelopment authority, such as a special

improvement district or Chamber of Commerce.

- Examine various traffic-calming techniques, such as raised intersections, signal timing, reduced speed limit, or additional on-street parking.
- Consolidated parking could be accomplished through one or more of the following:
- The rehabilitation statute.

- Establish a parking authority or Special Improvement District to plan, organize, finance, build surface or structured parking.
- Rationalize curb-cuts parking.
- Provide on-street and public parking.
- Change ordinances to reduce parking requirements.



WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP

Mayor Rudolph J. Wenzel, Jr.
Bergen County

5

Square Miles 2.96
Population 8,938

KEY QUESTIONS

What connections can be made among the various destinations here and between the destinations and the surrounding neighborhoods?

How can the park and other open space opportunities be used to organize this area?

How can the singular orientation of the mall and “back of the house” service functions be managed so that the park area, the brook, library and post office are not cut off from Pascack Avenue?

Are there long-term redevelopment opportunities here that would help solve this problem by linking these resources and creating a stronger identity for this “village center”?

PROBLEM STATEMENT Demonstrate ways of linking the Township's disparate civic, commercial and natural assets to give it a more coherent identity and appearance.

RESOURCE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Create strong connections between the municipal complex and the lake as the principal organizing idea for a redesigned shopping center and civic complex.

Increase opportunities for connecting the various uses in the area by upgrading existing paths, adding new paths for pedestrians and bicycles, and upgrading Pascack Avenue to better accommodate non-vehicular uses. New connections can be made to the High School by creating a new trail along the waterfront and incorporating it into a larger loop along several roads.

The shopping center, which has been upgraded and maintained, is a prime candidate for redevelopment to encourage more intensification while opening up access to the lake, library and post office, which are at the back end of the center. Structured parking could be employed to accom-

modate additional cars, and second floor space above the center should be considered for office or residential use to accommodate growth, add value and increase the likelihood of commercial success.

One ambitious possibility is to build a 3–4 story parking deck behind the shopping center, allowing the Township to create urban alleys, build new shops facing Pascack Street, and maximize planting of new trees.

Another strategy is to encourage redevelopment opportunities for the shopping center, including housing or offices on second floor. This redevelopment could create an opening in the middle of the center for access to the lake. Selective replacement of stores would allow for a more appropriate mix of retail and services, while enabling viable existing businesses to continue.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Landscaping and pedestrian improvements along Pascack Avenue.

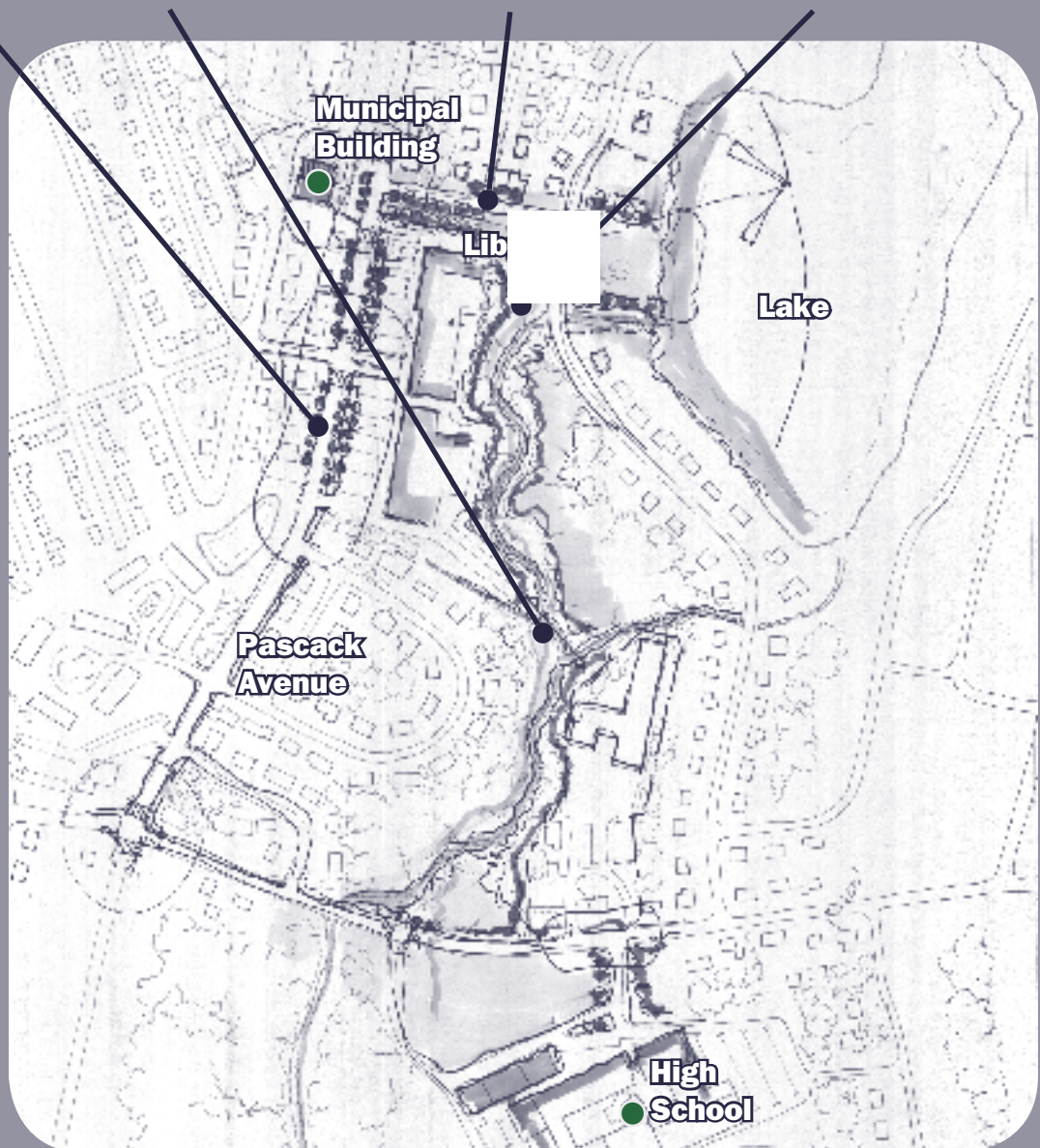
New greenway connection to link school to library, mall and municipal center.

Design connecting corridor from the municipal building to the lake.

Open library onto lake, greenway and new open space at edge of lake.

FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

- Work with the Lake Association to gain greater access to the lake, with perhaps a land swap or a Green Acres easement.
- Replace or remove the fence.
- Encourage library patrons to use nearby grassy areas and the lake by providing benches and parasols and installing directional signs pointing to these outdoor reading facilities.
- Use traffic calming to ease pedestrian movement in the area.
- Create a new green setting with new edges and vegetation to catch stormwater from parking lots.
- Build a pathway system to the High School.
- Design and landscape sidewalks.





METUCHEN BOROUGH

Mayor Mayor Edmund O' Brien
Middlesex County

Square Miles 2.74
Population 12,840



6

KEY QUESTIONS

What is the scale and mix of building and block types that can best complete downtown Metuchen in this area?

How can the proposed plan be phased so that the existing parking resources are not jeopardized?

What design guidelines should control the design of the garage structures?

How can the developments help integrate this area with the larger Walk Metuchen program?

PROBLEM STATEMENT Outline an urban design framework for the redevelopment areas adjacent to the tracks and New Street that promotes contextual mixed-use development and accommodates the town's parking requirements.

Not unlike other towns, Metuchen has several large surface parking lots on the block immediately adjacent to the railroad right-of-way, which is elevated on an embankment as it passes through this part of town. A recent development study calls for creating a new street and block pattern that would internalize shared parking, reinforce the edges of the street and accommodate new mixed-use development. A new supermarket would also be lined with mixed-use buildings – retail with housing above. All together, this new node would be the anchor for a redeveloped New Street axis to Main Street.

RESOURCE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Structured parking should be developed and phased in a way that does not jeopardize the existing parking, which is controlled by the Metuchen Parking Authority and is a huge revenue source for the town. It is also important to treat the structured parking in an architectural way. The urban design framework for the redevelopment areas must consider these points, as well as the need to promote connections and accommodate proposed and approved redevelopment projects.

With financial support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Metuchen has created and publicized five walking routes that connect residential neighborhoods with the Main Street/downtown area. Metuchen encourages its citizens to use these trails through a promotional campaign that includes brochures, a video produced by the local cable station, events, and walking clubs and competitions, sponsored by the Mayor's Office. These routes should be incorporated into the redevelopment strategies for the area.

The lots that connect the train station with the downtown offer the greatest opportunity.

With the parking lots generating over \$600,000 per year, the question is how to develop them without affecting the revenue stream. Economic, design and pedestrian considerations are necessary. And, with land valued at around \$1 million per acre, the 5-acre tract should be considered for its potential rather than its current status.

Resource team members wondered if the study area should be increased, to include other development opportunities. They also felt that the conflict will be on development uses (i.e., commuter versus community). Another consideration was those uses during the middle of the day, such as civic, as well as the possibility of portable parking decks, given the high cost of above (\$11,000) and below (\$17,000) ground spaces for structured parking. The team concluded that the economics of building new parking decks should be a "no-brainer" with special consideration given to a partial underground solution, given the town's 35' height restriction. One idea to surface was to build a deck into the embankment, another was to encourage a supermarket willing to share parking to locate adjacent to the property.

The mayor was encouraged to design the area with attractions in mind, encouraging movement above ground and not through parking lots. Also, biking facilities should be included. One possibility is to flip existing uses, and move the commuter parking further away from the station, with retail and public uses sited closer in. Like an airport, this transit facility could capture the commercial potential of commuters.

Four critical issues must be addressed: timing; risk of turning away transit consumers in an economic downturn; linkages by pedestrians and cyclists; and types of users (e.g., retail, housing, offices, etc.).



SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Potential greenway connection to redevelopment site.

Redevelopment zone: extend existing street and block pattern.

Reinforce the new street corridor.

New housing around edges of new parking decks.

Link redevelopment area to proposed greenway.



FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

- Tax increment financing.
- Purchase site(s) for replacement parking.
- Sell existing parking lots for private development.
- Land leases.
- Encourage the supermarket to move from current proposed site.



COLLINGSWOOD BOROUGH

Mayor M. James Maley Jr.
Camden County

Square Miles 1.92
Population 14,326



7

KEY QUESTIONS

What mix and configuration of uses best complete the existing fabric of downtown Collingswood?

What kinds of connections should be made from Haddon Avenue to these sites?

How should existing and future parking requirements be accommodated into future developments?

How do these sites relate to the train station area?

PROBLEM STATEMENT Outline an urban design and planning strategy for the underutilized parcels adjacent to the rail line that is complementary to downtown Collingswood.

Collingswood is one of the turn-around success stories of the 90's – from downtown on the brink to a hotspot – a main street with new specialty retail, and restaurants of all kinds that draw young professionals from Philadelphia. On the north side of Haddon Avenue are dense residential neighborhoods that are stable, but the streets, sidewalks and houses are not as well maintained as elsewhere in town. However, as with Metuchen, the land closest to the rail line is vacant, underutilized or used for surface parking.

RESOURCE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

The Borough should consider three main ideas: creating a destination; creating an urban forest; and connecting the rivers.

Creative use of the rivers, new trees and lighting for buildings can be the basis for what Dr. Gehl called a Blue-Green-Yellow Plan for community renewal, named for the colors of water, vegetation and illumination. The narrow width of Main Street will challenge efforts to widen sidewalks and plant trees. Creating a "Railway Square" could create an attractive destination and promote desired uses. Also, intersection control with coordinated signalization, bump-outs and other traffic calming will improve the area. Including "smart signs" for parking will ensure real time availability as well as a more efficient system.

Another opportunity is to create a meander-

ing path through the lumber yard site and along the perimeter of jagged edge lots. A piazza, commercial tower and gazebo are options. Connections from the neighborhoods to Main Street are critical, and investments in infrastructure are more important than revenue generation in the short-term, determined the team.

New development should face the tracks within a new street system. Another suggestion is to create a big block with a mid-block pedestrian connection. The challenge is to promote activities along the new streets that are complementary to, and not in competition with, Main Street. The Borough should upgrade the space under the PATCO line with lighting and landscaping. The Borough should also consider land banking to encourage mixed-use, multi-story development in the future.

The lumber yard site is a potential strong commercial anchor, but the size of the site may limit the choices and parking options. The Borough should map several possible sequences of open spaces through this block and new development should help define and activate the new open spaces.

A landscape plan should create an urban forest strategy. It would signal the upscale nature of the town and a community commitment to elevate the dignity of experience. One idea is to cover 50% of the area with trees within 10 years, with 16 trees per acre as a minimum.



SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

New greenway/bike-way connections between parks and community facilities.

New open space network through lumber yard site.

Reorganize "back of Haddon Avenue" parking lots for new development and public open space.

Greening and other streetscape improvements along Haddon Avenue.

Linkage to water.



FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

- Use streets, parks and other infrastructure to define community and potential redevelopment.
- Conduct a market analysis and develop a program for redevelopment.
- Use lighting and landscaping to improve the PATCO station area.
- Develop performance standards for public use, shared parking and neighborhood connections.
- Encourage residential development as part of mixed-use development for the area.
- Market the community using a common vision of the community's future.



LINDENWOLD BOROUGH

Mayor Frank DeLucca, Jr.
Camden County

Square Miles 3.97
Population 17,414

8

KEY QUESTIONS

What should be the urban design framework for the surface parking lots between the PATCO line and Berlin Avenue?

How should the PATCO station area be integrated with the surrounding commercial areas?

How should Berlin Avenue be redesigned to create a seam between the PATCO station area and the areas to the south?

What mix of uses is appropriate in the redevelopment areas?

What pedestrian and bicycle connections can be made within the study area, and from the study area to the rest of the town?

PROBLEM STATEMENT Create a place with a discrete identity at the western gateway by linking the site to its context, by suggesting how the surface parking areas can be better used and by proposing a redevelopment strategy for several large parcels around the PATCO facility.

RESOURCE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Viewing the transit service and the vast parking lots surrounding the station as an opportunity to accommodate mixed-use development in a town center manner could transform the community. In addition, the potential to provide housing ownership opportunities for casino workers in the short-term and Philadelphia market commuters in the long-term could help Lindenwold increase the percentage of homeowners as well as attract higher income residents. Third, given the possibility of locating a facility that would attract sports and entertainment venues, innovative use of development rights above the tracks could meet multiple objectives. Better use of lands along the river can complement these objectives and should be folded into the overall strategy.

Lindenwold would be wise to build on existing bicycle trails to the Station, as well as the connections provided by the PATCO and NJ Transit lines. Developing the parking lots in a manner that increases commuter safety while encouraging compact mixed-use development would also promote the strategies listed above.

Structured parking on the PATCO lots is key to any redevelopment effort. With 3,500 existing parking spots, and a current rate of \$1 per spot per day, the challenge will be to finance parking that could cost as much as \$15,000 per space. This architectural challenge requires a new planning paradigm, as well as sensitive design measures. The transit system enables development options that could create a 24/7 community, as well as retail and commercial uses tailored to commuters.

Collaborative efforts with adjacent commu-

nities such as Stratford Township to rationalize this existing “edge city” development will require enlarging the study area, as well as sharing uses and activities, such as parking. Finding alternate uses for the maintenance yard and turnaround would free up land around the lake for recreation and other amenity-based development.

The most ambitious plan would be a new mixed-use downtown. The New Downtown would require working with adjacent towns, the county, State agencies and the transit providers to create a joint regional center that could spur redevelopment and increase pedestrian and bicycle activity. Designation of this area of Lindenwold and adjacent Stratford Township as a center, with a plan endorsed by the State Planning Commission, should help promote the vision and streamline the approval process. Big actions include updating the Master Plan consistent with the State Plan, and creating a development corporation to address parking, development and financing issues.

If this were to be positioned as a demonstration project, NJDEP and other state agencies would expedite and streamline development permits for centers such as this in Lindenwold. Coordination with other regional plans will be necessary, such as those by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) and the Camden Hub Plan. Using the Somerset Regional Center and partnership as a model, the N.J. Office of Smart Growth should sponsor a design charrette, viewing Lindenwold as a potential poster town for smart growth: economic generator that enjoys transit infrastructure and collaboration, and a broad mix of uses and activities.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Replace surface parking with parking decks.

Develop connection to hospital and other resources.

Remake strip development to create well-defined edge along Berlin Avenue.

"Gateway" and connections to other municipalities.

Replace surface parking with mixed-use development.

New street and block network.



FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Further recommendations include creating a regional strategy, an updated master plan and ordinances, and a strategic phasing plan to identify specific actions to implement the regional vision and local master plan. The design elements of this effort would include:

- A new network of linked, public spaces.
- Structured parking on both sides of the tracks.
- A gateway image.
- Highway and streetscape improvements.
- Retail facing a new public green.
- Improved access to the lake.
- Development along the lake for seniors, conference center and other appropriate uses.
- Reducing or eliminating the Railroad turnaround and relocating the train station.
- Compact, mixed-use development (within ¼ mile or 15 minute walk).



TINTON FALLS BOROUGH

Mayor Ann Y. McNamara
Monmouth County



9

KEY QUESTIONS

What configuration and mix of uses in the Shafto Road development parcel would best support this goal?

What design guidelines and what design principles and strategies should guide future development at the large site to best support this goal?

What land use and urban design strategies should inform the overall study area to achieve this goal of creating a complete neighborhood?

From a healthy communities perspective, what connections – particularly bicycle and pedestrian connections – can integrate the study area south of Route 18 and, more ambitiously, the rest of Tinton Falls to the north?

PROBLEM STATEMENT Outline the major dimensions of a complete neighborhood in the southern half of Tinton Falls Township.

RESOURCE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

The centerpiece of this design problem is to suggest ways in which the southern half of the town with its winding road and cul-de-sac housing developments might become a more complete neighborhood and, in particular, how several of the remaining development opportunities could be used in service of that goal. At issue was how to get people from existing developments to newly purchased parkland, as well as how to redesign the industrial zone and residential areas to be more compatible. There is a space issue between the north and south sides of town, with big distances and a tough geography to cross. Recreation and commercial/service needs were raised by the mayor. Shopping areas in the town are auto-oriented, and opportunities for bike or pedestrian movement are lost with disconnected buildings.

The team noted these developments are scattered and lack a human side. The team sought solutions that would provide a shared place for workers and residents. The focus of attention was on how to create a better site plan than those proposed for the open areas adjacent to the

residential community and the newly-acquired parkland. The team recognized it was unreasonable to believe people would walk or bike the large distances from the north to the south of the Township. However, they were confident that new connections between adjacent sites could be planned to encourage more opportunities for neighborhood walking or biking. Redeveloping connections through new development can provide Tinton Falls with a unique opportunity.

While new bike path connections between the north and south ends of town are worth promoting, the distances are large and there are major physical barriers. Nevertheless, redevelopment of large sites would create opportunities to link the large residential developments to new parks and nodes of mixed-use development.

The town should plat the area for new development, and bring developers in to show the needs and desires of the community to change the trend of development.



SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Greenway connections into housing developments.

New retail and office developments create "gateway" both to the redevelopment area and the residential developments.

Place parking behind buildings which are oriented toward the open space network

Link office park redevelopment site to new residential development.

Integrate community facilities into office park development.

Use new office development to define public open spaces.



FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

- Include community uses for land on the west side.
- Don't approve new development that doesn't allow for connections to existing facilities.
- Require ancillary facilities to be separate and shared by residents and others, including uses such as a cafeteria or a health club.
- Develop a new model for the suburban

- ban office park, including pedestrian and bicycle paths, neighborhood mixed-use commercial development, and civic space.
- Transform undeveloped areas into more usable spaces by securing easements and developing partnerships with homeowner associations.
- Connect mini-parks into a greenway system, and encourage people to use

the existing sidewalk system.

- Create a lake with facilities and a restaurant, as a special feature distinguishing the area.
- Create an open space plan for the area.
- Adjust the traffic signalization to encourage pedestrian and bicycle use.



LUMBERTON TOWNSHIP

Mayor Preston M. Taylor, Jr.
Burlington County

Square Miles 13.04
Population 10,461

10

KEY QUESTIONS

What new connections can be made between the Bobby's Wales Run Boulevard neighborhoods and the development parcels east of Eayerstown Road?

What new connections, including bicycle and pedestrian connections, can be made between the development parcels east of Eayerstown Road and the Route 38 commercial corridor?

How should the potential extension of Bobby's Wales Run Boulevard east of Eayerstown Road be handled?

How should Bobby's Wales Run Boulevard be re-designed?

What design guidelines should shape future commercial development along the Route 38 corridor, facilitating connections between developments and balancing pedestrian needs with automobile needs?

PROBLEM STATEMENT Provide a planning and urban design framework for the northeast quadrant of the Township that knits together, and creates a transition between future commercial development along Route 38 and the residential areas straddling Bobby's Wales Run Boulevard.

Bobby's Wales Run is a wide road, over a mile in length with an adjacent park that attracts people of all ages. Suburban-style development created this road, and the existing development patterns would create more of the same: traffic, separate, unconnected uses and an increasing lack of affordable housing. The overall strategy is to better design roads and provide traffic calming to encourage pedestrian and bicycle movement through the neighborhoods to the park and beyond. However, a larger question that must be answered before a strategy could be developed is: What does the town want to be?

RESOURCE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Making connections without making traffic worse is the key to the Lumberton case study. Proper planning and design prior to development review and approval, including a build-out analysis and the reservation of streets could go a long way to addressing the ills facing growing suburban towns like Lumberton. With schools in the development and adjacent sites expected to be developed in the near future, a comprehensive strategy is needed to design the next generation of growth around the schools and encourage the whole community through a public process to recommend ways to improve the design and function of new growth to improve the quality of life for the entire town.

This case study focused on redesigning Bobby's Wales Run and other nearby roads to include vertical and horizontal improvements (e.g., speed humps or bumps, circles, etc.), and a dramatic narrowing according to traffic volumes, speeds, emergency uses, and other related data. Conversations with police, fire and emergency service staff should help identify opportunities to modify roads to meet multiple goals. NJDOT can provide

information on context-sensitive design and traffic calming options.

Develop a master plan that uses the large undeveloped areas as the link between the residential neighborhoods along Bobby's Wales Run Boulevard and a re-configured commercial corridor along Route 38. Context-sensitive road design and traffic calming techniques would ensure that future development does not increase traffic or accident rates. Separate bike lanes and create natural features that make walking and biking a preferred alternative.

Identifying opportunities for accommodating growth in a manner that encourages pedestrian and bicycle movement is also important to meeting the overall strategy. The Master Plan should be updated to plat streets, layout the circulation network and include design guidelines for streets, as well as integrate open space and other community facilities and services.

A design idea for a vacant site in the study area includes creating a park with playing fields and encouraging higher density development that preserves nearby open space and creates new connections for cars, pedestrians and bicycles in a more harmonious manner. Such action would require advanced planning of open space, recreation and lighting prior to allowing housing to be constructed, to address noxious uses before residents come. A reconfigured road network with pedestrian connections and a circuitous route to discourage speeding is also recommended.

Lumberton needs a design plan for the larger area, as well as specific actions to improve existing development and accommodate new growth.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

New residential development around greenway connections using transferred development rights.

Traffic calming along Bobby's Wales Run Boulevard.

New park spaces are the transition and the link between commercial development and Route 38 and residential developments.

Redesign highway, commercial strip: new streets and blocks, rationalized parking, comprehensive design for pedestrian realm.



FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

- Vertical (speed humps and bumps) and horizontal changes to high-volume roads, with solutions tempered by traffic data and emergency use.
- Dramatic narrowing of some streets.
- Separating bike lanes.
- Using trees, swales and other natural and man-made improvements.
- Master Plan update, road design regulations and the platting of streets.



MONTGOMERY TOWNSHIP

Mayor Louise Wilson
Somerset County

Square Miles 32.62
Population 17,481

11

KEY QUESTIONS

What are the major components of a design and planning framework for the two large parcels straddling the railroad tracks?

How should new development relate to the proposed Route 206 re-alignment?

How should the existing uses and the historic residential area be integrated into the plans for this area?

From a healthy communities perspective, how can this area be integrated with a larger bicycle and pedestrian network for the Township?

PROBLEM STATEMENT How can various development opportunities and infrastructure improvements be leveraged to lay the foundations for reestablishing Belle Mead as a local center with its own distinct identity.

Montgomery Township is in many ways exemplary of a pattern that has been played out across the region – an historic agrarian town located in a strategic growth corridor is transformed into a burgeoning bedroom community. Three key issues affect the township: traffic, taxes and development, as well as other complexities facing a number of growing suburban towns. While bike trails are being planned, most people drive. Historic train stations with little room for parking flank rail tracks that no longer serve passenger service. The township is losing seniors and empty nesters, while there's an increasing opposition to new housing. The township wants the West Trenton line restored, and is willing to consider increasing housing density to meet infrastructure and market demand, but fears of changing zoning will invite litigation.

RESOURCE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Because conservation zoning for the largest open parcel would likely be contested, an intermediate strategy is to allow age-restricted development for a limited term, then have the area considered a commerce transportation hub rather than a transit village. The Route 206/601 interchange should be redesigned in conjunction with a land use plan for a larger area, rather than simply as a highway engineering project. A long-term consideration is whether the reactivation of the West Trenton Line would affect the plan for this area.

The design of Route 206 and of the remaining parcels can promote pedestrian and bicycle connections between the existing residential developments and a new revitalized town center at Belle Mead.

Because conservation zoning for the largest open parcel would likely be contested, an intermediate strategy is to allow age-restricted develop-

ment for a limited term, then have the area considered a commerce transportation hub rather than a transit village that would have significantly more residential development. The Route 206/601 interchange should be redesigned in conjunction with a land use plan for a larger area, rather than simply as a highway engineering project.

Development opportunities, as well as anticipated investments in intersection improvements and a possible bypass, create possibilities for more pedestrian and bicycle use.

Undeveloped farmland between the tracks and Route 601 west of the Reading Boulevard corridor and two major undeveloped parcels provides opportunities for conservation and development that is more integrated with its surroundings.

The resource team recommended creating a precinct by identifying boundaries, preserving lands, incorporating zoning changes and including clustering options, and supplementing zoning with reduced footprints and floor-area ratios. Through an open space plan, streams could be used as a gateway system connecting natural resource areas. Platting streets would help with connectivity and maintain community character. A sophisticated economic analysis would help determine an overall strategy that is not confiscatory, and advance zoning adjustments with density bonuses.

Because conservation zoning for the largest open parcel would likely be contested, an intermediate strategy is to allow age-restricted development for a limited term, then have the area considered a commerce transportation hub rather than a transit village that would have significantly more residential development. The Route 206/601 interchange should be redesigned in conjunction with a land use plan for a larger area, rather than simply as a highway engineering project.





SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Link to new residential developments.

Roadway improvements should support neighborhood, land use patterns and pedestrians.

Reinforce and build on the historic neighborhood pattern.

Reestablish the historic village center.



FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

- Conservation zoning and continuing the active open space/farmland preservation program.
- Exploring a Transfer of Development Rights program to create density in a new downtown.
- Plan future streets to frame growth.
- Conduct an economic analysis.
- Reactivate the West Trenton Rail Line.
- Re-design the Route 206 Bypass and reconfigure the anticipated Route 206/601 interchange to better serve the local community.
- Rezone areas for higher density housing and commercial/retail development.
- Take advantage of NJ Transit technical assistance.



WEST AMWELL

Mayor Peter A. Buchsbaum
Hunterdon County

Square Miles 21.90
Population 2,383

12

KEY QUESTIONS

What should be the overall design and layout of a new best practice, residential subdivision in this area?

What connections can be made from the study area to the surrounding context?

What would be the design features of a new center in the Mount Airy area?

PROBLEM STATEMENT Provide a design for the Mount Airy area and several nearby development sites that demonstrates the benefits of somewhat higher density development on less land.

RESOURCE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Accommodating growth without overtaking the community is a challenge facing many towns in New Jersey. Preserving rural character and large open lands while planning for growth in West Amwell will require enhanced planning and design. Opportunities for growth can often be found in historic centers that may accommodate infill or adjacent development. Often, these areas have some housing and perhaps limited commercial development, but not the wastewater system necessary to serve new growth. Thus, the overall strategy requires planning for a generation, addressing natural and man-made infrastructure capacities, anticipating affordable housing needs and opportunities for beneficial development, and adopting design guidelines to enhance the quality of life for all residents.

The big design idea for West Amwell was to promote higher densities in areas near the original village center of Mount Airy by transferring development from rural preservation areas and create linkages from there to other resources in the Township. Retiring development rights from other areas and changing lot sizes beyond the center to large lots (e.g., 12 -20 acres/unit on average) can help maintain the rural character while accommodating growth pressures. Create strong design guidelines to encourage compact, mixed-used centers, and transfer development rights from farms and forests to areas that can

accommodate growth in a manner consistent with historic development. In addition, maximum floor area ratios could be implemented to avoid McMansion developments so antithetical to the rural character of the area. The Resource Team recommended neighborhood charrettes to develop a vision for the new growth. Efforts to work with existing landowners should continue, with township officials urged to consider county and state technical assistance and existing models of development (e.g., Pennington, Woolwich, Washington Town Center, Chesterfield, and other related center-based development).

Provide greenway linkages from the Mount Airy area to the high school campus. The new residential subdivisions planned for the large redevelopment parcels should include connections between the high school and the original Mount Airy Center. Incorporate a range of housing types in a compact center that can promote walking and biking, and other opportunities to make Mount Airy a “Healthy Community.”

Addressing wastewater and other infrastructure will require innovative thinking and action. The cost of a package plant or other service could be shared with existing and future residents and businesses, and will vary according to the size and scale of development to be serviced.

The Resource Team identified the opportunity for an “End State” plan that would contemplate a generation of growth (25-30 years).

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Transfer future growth into the township to larger development parcels near Mount Airy center.

Allow higher density in return for integrated street pattern and greenway connections.

Reestablish historic Mount Airy village center.

Develop greenway connections between Mount Airy area and other township resources such as the school and municipal complex.



FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

- Carrying capacity analyses.
- Transfer of development rights.
- Wastewater treatment and public water limited to the village center.
- Natural infrastructure (e.g., vegetative swales).
- Mixed-use and mixed-income housing.
- Restricting permits outside of designated growth area.



Mayor Phyllis L. Marchand
Mercer County

Square Miles	1.85
Population	14,203

P1

Regional Plan Association, with assistance from the NJ Office of Smart Growth, convened a pilot project team that also included representatives from NJDOT and the RBA Group. The team conducted an initial field visit to better determine the area of focus and examined the shopping center and immediate environs. The field visit covered Harrison Street, Terhune Road, Grover Road and Grover Park. Connections to other nearby bicycle and pedestrian trip generators including the high school, middle school, charter school, ball fields, Guyot Avenue path, municipal pool and the municipal complex were also examined. Maps and current crash data were assembled. A week later, the team spent a day working with local officials and municipal staff. Following an early morning walk around and a general discussion, the attendees were divided into three breakout groups: on pedestrian access and safety, bicycle access and safety, and traffic calming. Each group spent about forty-five minutes discussing options and sketching ideas on base maps. A designee from each breakout group made a presentation that detailed the group's recommendations.

The site visits pointed to the Harrison Street corridor, between Bunn Drive and Clearview Avenue, as the area of greatest need for bicycle and pedestrian safety and access.

- Sidewalks exist only on one side of Harrison.
- Existing sidewalk along Harrison is too narrow with vegetation encroaching.
- Valley Road and Terhune Road intersections are wide (long crossing distance).
- Multiple turn lanes at Valley and Terhune require pedestrians to focus attention in many places when they cross any of the four legs of the intersections.
- No median refuge areas at Valley or Terhune.
- Traffic seemed to be going quickly along Harrison (no speed data though).
- Crossings at all locations were very plain and drab, not an inviting or distinct pedestrian environment; pedestrian route to the shopping center not highlighted or defined.
- Bicycle traffic not accommodated – lanes not

- Traffic is too fast in both directions at Bunn Drive. The intersection is problematic for pedestrians due in part to large radius curve leading to road that goes to Princeton Community Village. Traffic heading to shopping center accelerates around the curve. Seems too fast leading into a zone where pedestrians are being encouraged to walk.

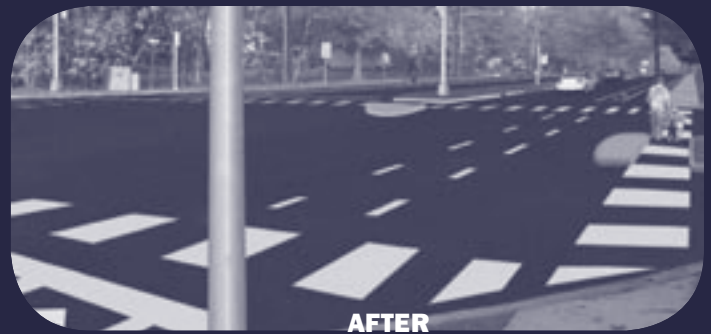
- Generally an auto-centric layout.
- No defined walking path from entrances to either the outside sidewalk (“rear” entrances of stores) or to the “gateways” into the center of the mall.
- Ring-road traffic probably moving too fast.
- Entrances not well defined.
- Rear entrances to stores not particularly inviting.
- Location of gas station poor.

- Construct visible crosswalks with landscaping and architectural details to get pedestrians from outer loop of the shopping center to inner crosswalks through parking area.
- Construct new crosswalk to line up with entrance toward the center of the front of the shopping center. Include connection to existing sidewalk along Harrison Street.
- Construct a new path through Grover Park for improved access to the rear entrance of the shopping center.
- Continue path that currently extends between the shopping center entrance at Clearview Avenue to Grover Park around parking lot and link with the sidewalk along Harrison. Add amenities like benches.
- Construct sidewalk along Grover Road to link Park area to residential areas.
- Include new pedestrian connections that connect to grocery store as undeveloped parcel designs progress.
- Construct sidewalk on western side of Harrison Ave. by removing one lane of traffic (road diet).





BEFORE



AFTER

- Construct sidewalk on Ewing Street.
- Relocate gas station to corner of shopping center near Clearview Avenue.
- Parking issue – parking structure.
- Median treatments along Harrison Street should be improved to accommodate a pedestrian refuge at the intersections of Valley Road and Terhune Road.

Bicycle

- Construct sidewalk and bike lanes along Harrison Avenue by removing one lane of traffic in each direction (road diet).
- Extend existing outer loop multi-use path around the shopping center to connect to Harrison Avenue. Add directional/mile markers that indicate distance traveled.
- Widen existing path through Grover Park and construct a new trail through the park that will line up with the shopping center entrance.
- Bike parking (multiple locations) additions at entrances surrounding the shopping center.
- As undeveloped parcel designs come forward, include a new bicycle-and-pedestrian-accessible entrance.
- Relocate service station.
- Add “No turn on red” sign to the Shopping Center exit at Valley. Explore adding additional “No turn on red” sign at intersection of Valley and Terhune as road diet occurs.
- Continue bike lanes along Bunn Drive. If traffic signal is added, add bicycle detection to signal plan. Consider constructing roundabout (no bike lanes through roundabout).

Traffic Calming Needs (outside the shopping center)

- Along Harrison Avenue – narrow the street (put sidewalk on west side of Harrison Avenue).
- New crosswalk treatments.
- Textured crosswalk on four sides can be added at the intersections at Valley and Terhune Roads.
- Construct roundabout at Bunn Drive.

(inside the shopping center)

- Construct raised crosswalks across shopping center’s inner and outer ring road at several locations.
- Relocate path in Grover Park to have it line up better with shopping center entrance.
- On undeveloped parcel, provide pedestrian access from Terhune as the parcel is developed.

COMMON THEMES

- Road diet (eliminating one motor vehicle travel

lane in each direction) along Harrison Avenue to accommodate bike lanes. Add sidewalk with buffer area along western side of Harrison.

- Access through undeveloped parcel should accommodate pedestrians and cyclists.
- Relocate gas station.
- Construct a new path through Grover Park to line up with shopping center entrance.
- Construct median refuge treatments at Valley Road and Terhune with enhanced crosswalk treatments.
- Continuation of existing outer loop path to wrap around and connect to Harrison Avenue.
- Line up access through parking lots from outside to line up with opening access to mall area.
- Generally improve pedestrian access across loop roads.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- The pedestrian refuge areas to be developed at the Valley and Terhune Road intersections should include a signal push button. Explore installing Pedestrian Accessible signals with vibro-tactile buttons at each intersection to aid the visually impaired, especially if the undeveloped parcel becomes a senior housing facility.
- Curb cuts should include truncated dome tactile treatments as indicated in FHWA’s Designing Sidewalk and Trails for Access, per ADA requirements.
- Consider Leading Pedestrian Interval timing to cross Harrison at the Valley and Terhune Road intersections.

A number of short term actions were identified: installing sidewalks along Ewing, Grover and other surrounding roads; installing additional bicycle racks at the shopping center; implementing “no turn on red” signs and ordinances; and striping a new crosswalk across Harrison at Valley Road.

The bulk of the recommendations, however, are more long-term. For example, improvements to the median of Harrison Street, narrowing the travel lanes and adding a sidewalk along the western lane of Harrison require more extensive planning and should be installed at the same time.

Many of these recommendations require public sector investment; others should be funded by the Princeton Shopping Center, as part of future redevelopment activities on the property. It is important to develop an overall plan for the area that will assure coordination between public and private capital investments to implement these recommendations.



Walkability/Bikeability Pilot Project

RIVER VALE TOWNSHIP

Mayor George Paschalis
Bergen County

Square Miles 4.31
Population 9,449

P2

KEY QUESTIONS

What uses should be considered for the underutilized industrial buildings along Totowa Avenue, Ryle Avenue and Ryle Road?

How should new development accommodate the extraordinary topography and natural features of this area?

How can this project promote redevelopment of the surrounding neighborhoods?

From a healthy communities perspective, how can the redevelopment opportunities in this area be linked to the larger greenway plan for the city?

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of the River Vale pilot project was to provide more specific guidance for the Four Corners section, in terms of urban design, traffic calming and pedestrian and bicycle circulation.

RPA assembled a design team that included representatives from NJ Office of Smart Growth, NJDOT, the RBA Group, the Voorhees Transportation Policy Institute, Bergen County and local officials, along with area merchants, property-owners and residents. This group engaged in a day-long effort, which began with a site tour and continued with interactive sessions at the municipal building.

The team began by defining the following area of attention: Westwood Avenue from Doretta Street east to Peter's Place; and Rivervale Road, 180 feet north from the intersection of Westwood Road extending south to the intersection of Brookside. Following a general discussion, the attendees were divided into three breakout groups: on traffic calming and access, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and context sensitive design. Each group spent about forty-five minutes discussing options and sketching ideas on base maps. A designee from each breakout group made a presentation that detailed the group's recommendations.

ISSUES NOTED

- There are numerous gaps in the sidewalks along the legs to the intersections.
- Some segments of sidewalks are in very poor repair.
- Some of the sign messages are washed out.
- Crosswalks are not clear and are not aligned with the approach sidewalk.
- Access from parking areas and abutting properties is problematic, with several access driveways in close proximity to the intersection itself.
- The approach on three legs consists of a left turn lane and a combined through and right turn lane. The fourth leg, River Vale Road from the north, has only one approach lane (all movements combined); this sometimes results in traffic queuing up to wait for left turn traffic.
- A pending county project to widen the northern leg of the intersection provides an opportunity to incorporate a variety of bicycle and pedestrian improvements for 400 feet along each leg of the intersection; this project is being delayed as a result of issues related to the acquisition of property or an easement required for the widening on the eastern side of this leg of the intersection.

- Truck traffic did not appear to be high.
- The intersection is at a skew that results in very large turning radii at two corners, and at the other two (acute angle) corners the radii have been increased at the expense of sidewalk space.
- There are no pedestrian signal heads or pedestrian push buttons.
- Pedestrian view of signals is very poor; it is very difficult to observe the signals to know when it is appropriate to begin to cross the street.
- There are no bicycle accommodations or designated bike lanes at the intersection. There is only one (low security) bicycle rack at one of the commercial properties adjacent to the intersection (the Eckerd property).
- Parking in front of the liquor store property in the southwest quadrant, encroached on the sidewalk at the corner.
- Curb ramps are substandard.
- New sidewalks (5.5 feet wide flanked by brick pavers 1-foot wide) have been installed along a portion of one side of Westwood Avenue (the western approach).
- On two of the four corners, development is set back from the intersection, with the space adjacent to the intersection (sidewalk) devoted to parking or pavement. This contributes to a non-village, non-pedestrian friendly environment.
- On one corner (the south east), there is development adjacent a wide sidewalk (along Westwood).
- The northeast corner has development close to the intersection. It is occupied by a house that is to be removed to provide sufficient roadway width for two approach lanes on the southbound approach to the intersection on River Vale (a through/right, and an exclusive left turn lane).
- Utility poles, light standards and in some cases trees are located within the sidewalk area.

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

Circulation Improvements - General Traffic Calming and Access

- Sidewalks need to be constructed, reconstructed or repaired along all legs of the intersection within the focus area (to logical termini).
- Curb extensions should be constructed along the receiving lanes exiting the intersection.
- Reduce lane widths as much as possible.



BEFORE



AFTER

- Crossing opportunities should be provided at locations other than at the intersection itself, particularly at the “new” park on the east side of River Vale.
- The bus stop should be relocated to the vicinity of this crosswalk.
- Access to the liquor store parking lot should be closed off, with access provided by other means. Speed humps should be installed in the parking area behind the liquor store and the proposed new development.
- Parking in the liquor store parking lot should be reconfigured to eliminate encroachment on the sidewalk area.
- Speed limits should be reduced to 25 mph at all legs at least within the focus area (there was some discussion as to whether the speed limit is already, or should actually be, 25 mph as a result of statutory requirements).
- The receiving (westbound) lane of Westwood is excessively wide. Various options of narrowing it were discussed, including creating parking, bike lanes and addition of a median (negative comments to a median were raised in subsequent discussions since a median would preclude left turns onto abutting properties).

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

- Bike lanes should be provided along the southern leg of River Vale and the western leg of Westwood. These were thought to provide a connection with other elements of a local bike-way network, and a proposed bike path in a nearby county park. Note: in subsequent discussions another suggestion was made to narrow the excessive pavement width along Westwood to the west, i.e. move the sidewalk to the roadway side of existing mature trees and use the additional green space provided for passive or active activities.
- A “bike box” should be installed on northbound River Vale. This is a space for bicycle traffic, when present, to queue and wait for a “green” signal and will give bicycle traffic the opportunity to respond to the green in advance of motor vehicles. This could especially facilitate a left turn by bicycle traffic going from the bike lanes on northbound (approach) River Vale to westbound Westwood.
- New sidewalk treatments at all locations that do not presently have sidewalks and where sidewalk is damaged or substandard. Close to the intersection, sidewalks should at least match the new sidewalk (wider) recently constructed along

Westwood.

- Block access to and from the liquor store parking lot that now exists near the intersection on southbound River Vale.
- Alter the traffic pattern/parking in front of the liquor store.
- Pedestrian signal heads and push buttons should be installed at all corners.
- All poles, trees and signal standards should be located outside the sidewalk.
- Signals should be accessible.
- Appropriately designed curb ramps should be installed at all corners.
- Bicycle parking needs to be routinely provided at various commercial areas.
- Redo the lighting; provide pedestrian scale lighting.

Context Sensitive Design

- The space is eclectic in terms of land use, building design, etc.
- Use the new park as a focal point and begin to establish a 3-dimensional park-like atmosphere in the focus area.
- Provide green buffers in as many locations as possible: between sidewalk and roadway, along building fronts, in parking areas.
- Promote a homesteading concept to install and maintain green spaces and street furniture.
- Heights of greenery should be varied.
- Create interest and intrigue: put plaques on specimen trees identifying them.
- Feature the clock (at the corner where the service station is now located).
- Install bird-houses, planters; create butterfly parks.
- Provide bicycle parking.
- Involve service organizations, local landscapers, boy/girl scouts in maintenance.
- Increase activity: bring in a seasonal farmers market; bring in sculpture.
- Pick a color palette (for structures) and a street furniture palette.
- Create a special improvement district to fund some of these activities.

PROPOSED CIRCULATION IMPROVEMENTS - SPECIFIC Westwood Avenue (Western Leg)

- Left turn lane approaching Rivervale Road has been aligned with the opposing left turn lane.
- This realignment provides additional space for on-street parking (8 feet) flanked by curb extensions on the south side.



RIVER VALE TOWNSHIP (CONT.)

- Because the lanes were shifted northward, the southwest corner radius was extended into the intersection, reducing the crossing width for pedestrians.
- 14-foot-wide travel lanes are provided to accommodate a shared condition for vehicles and cyclists.
- A center median provides for an area of green space and functions as a transition into the Four Corners area.
- A plaza area is provided in front of the shopping center for exhibits and placement of sculpture.
- Sidewalks have been relocated to next to the curb to accommodate a green buffer to screen off-street parking.
- A small plaza area is provided at the northwest corner to accommodate the proposed Four Corners clock.

Westwood Avenue (Eastern Leg)

- Continuous sidewalks are proposed on the north side extending to Peter's Place. A grass buffer separates the sidewalk from the curb.
- On-street parking is proposed on the north side (8 feet wide).
- Curb extensions are provided at the east end acting as a transition into the Four Corners area. They also function to protect parking, reduce the crossing distance for pedestrian, and increase visibility for crossing next to on-street parking.
- The southeast corner radius was extended to align the intersection and reduce crossing distance.
- A refuge island is located at the southeast corner to reduce the crossing distance and exposure to traffic.
- Curb extensions can be green areas or hardscape materials differentiating them from the sidewalks.
- 14-foot-wide travel lanes are proposed to accommodate a shared condition for vehicles and cyclists.
- A raised intersection is proposed at the east end to slow traffic as they enter the Four Corners area and functions to enhance the transition. This also provides pedestrians a location to cross other than the main intersection of Rivervale.

Rivervale Road (North Leg)

- The roadway is proposed to be widened to the east to accommodate a left turn lane, and measures 33 feet wide.
- A 5-foot sidewalk is provided on the east and west sides to connect to Westwood and north the existing sidewalks.

Rivervale Road (South Leg)

- Northbound travel lane is proposed to be reduced to accommodate a center median, which can be a green

- area or function as a center turn lane. This also allows for an exclusive left turn lane into the driveway of the proposed assisted living facility.
- On-street parking has been provided on the west side, flanked by curb extensions.
- A mid-block raised intersection is proposed at the entrance drive of the proposed Jewish Home. This will slow traffic as visitors enter the Four Corners area, function as a transition, and provide a pedestrian crossing adjacent to the proposed "pocket park."
- 5-foot sidewalks are proposed along the entire south leg, extending to Brookside.
- The existing bus stop is proposed to be relocated, southbound just prior to the raised intersection.
- 14-foot-wide travel lanes are provided to accommodate a shared condition for vehicles and cyclists, with the exception of the first 120 feet of the southbound lane, where the lane is 11 feet. Right-of-way should be sought at this location to provide 14-foot-wide lane.
- A striped crosswalk and median are proposed on the south side of Brookside.

COMMUNITY DESIGN ISSUES

From a community design standpoint, the Four Corners currently feels more like an intersection than a place. This is, in part, because there is too much pavement relative to the size and bulk of buildings that front on it, which are not substantial.

The eastern side of the intersection is better anchored by buildings. The Southeast corner is anchored by an office building, which although single story is close to the intersection. The Northeast corner is occupied by a somewhat dilapidated two-story single-family house which, again, is close enough to the intersection to anchor it. These two buildings help define the intersection and provide some sense of enclosure.

The western side of the intersection, on the other hand, is too open and undefined. The building fronting the SW corner is set back and separated from the intersection by an awkward and potentially dangerous parking lot. The NW corner is occupied by an old gas/service station and is clearly underutilized.

Both the parcel fronting the NE corner and the parcel fronting the NW corner appear to be possible targets for redevelopment. Bergen County's plan to improve the intersection includes right-of-way acquisition, to be taken

from the NE corner parcel. This proposal also implies demolition of the existing building. There currently are no proposals for replacing that building or for redevelopment of the gas station across the street.

The plans to improve the intersection must be accompanied by an appropriate community design and land-use strategy. In order to turn the Four Corners into a place with a real personality that the population of River Vale will clearly identify as the center of their community, the intersection and the surrounding buildings and public spaces must be viewed together to create a place where pedestrians will feel comfortable.

River Vale should take the necessary measures to ensure that redevelopment of the NE and NW corners results in buildings with a scale and proximity to the street that will further anchor the intersection. Two story buildings – that wrap-around all or most of the available frontage – are greatly preferred. If the proposed Four Corners clock is located on the NW corner, the new building should be set back slightly to accommodate a small public space, which might simply be a double wide sidewalk that extends along the north side of Westwood Avenue all the way to the elementary school. This enhanced pedestrian corridor would be wide enough to accommodate a double row of street trees, street furniture, and public art, culminating with the Four Corners clock.

Current parking requirements are excessive, and the minimum number of spaces required on-site is seriously decreasing the building potential on these sites. This equation should be reversed to allow for more building and less parking.

River Vale should work with the two property owners to create redevelopment plans that are attractive real estate ventures and achieve the community design objectives. River Vale should consider using the state's redevelopment statutes to further this process.

ACTIONS

To address the community design issues associated with the Four Corners, River Vale should consider the following actions:

- Revisit zoning – allow (encourage) mixed-use.
- Revisit minimum setback, maximum coverage and other bulk standards for the Four Corners district, to allow (encourage) buildings closer to the street.
- Investigate use of redevelopment statutes – application of the redevelopment statutes is likely to offer benefits to both the property owners and to River Vale.
- Revise subdivision and site plan ordinances – require interconnections between parking lots of adjacent

commercial properties.

- Revise vehicular parking standards – allow (encourage) shared parking arrangements and on-street parking as strategies for meeting minimum parking requirements.
- Allow (encourage) financial contributions from developers to a municipal parking trust fund as a way of satisfying parking requirements.
- Investigate location for municipal parking lot – a shared municipal parking lot, paid in part by developer contributions, and within a 5-minute walk of the intersection would allow greater intensity of development on individual sites and consequently a more balanced relationship between buildings and road.
- Revise parking standards – lower excessive on-site parking requirements.
- Revise parking standards – add bicycle parking requirements.



Regional Plan Association

4 Irving Place
7th floor
New York, NY 10003
212.253.2727

Two Landmark Square
Suite 108
Stamford, CT 06901
203.356.0390

94 Church Street
Suite 401
New Brunswick, NJ 08901
732.828.9945

Regional Plan Association (RPA) is an independent regional planning organization that improves the quality of life and the economic competitiveness of the 31-county New York-New Jersey-Connecticut region through research, planning, and advocacy. Since 1922, RPA has been shaping transportation systems, protecting open spaces, and promoting better community design for the region's continued growth. We anticipate the challenges the region will face in the years to come, and we mobilize the region's civic, busi-

ness, and government sectors to take action. RPA's current work is aimed largely at implementing the ideas put forth in the Third Regional Plan, with efforts focused in five project areas: community design, open space, transportation, workforce and the economy, and housing. For more information about Regional Plan Association, please visit our website, www.rpa.org.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chairman

Peter W. Herman

**Vice Chairman and
 Co-Chairman, New Jersey**
 Christopher J. Daggett

**Vice Chairman and
 Co-Chairman, New Jersey**
 Hon. James J. Florio

**Vice Chairman and
 Co-Chairman, Connecticut**
 John S. Griswold, Jr.

**Vice Chairman and
 Co-Chairman, Connecticut**
 Matthew S. Kissner

**Vice Chairman and
 Co-Chairman, Long Island**
 David J. Manning

**Vice Chairman and
 Co-Chairman, Long Island**
 Robert A. Scott

President
 Robert D. Yaro

Treasurer
 Brendan J. Dugan

Robert F. Arning
 Hillary M. Ballon
 Charles A. Bauer
 Laurie Beckelman
 Stephen R. Beckwith
 Edward J. Blakely
 J. Max Bond, Jr.
 Roscoe C. Brown, Jr.
 Richard J. Carbone
 Edward T. Cloonan
 Tina Cohoe
 Jill M. Considine
 Michael R. Cowan
 Paul A. Crotty
 Alfred A. DelliBovi
 Nancy R. Douzinas
 Barbara J. Fife
 Michael Golden
 Arthur E. Imperatore, Jr.
 Kenneth T. Jackson
 Ira H. Jolles
 Richard A. Kahan
 Richard D. Kaplan
 Shirley Strum Kenny
 Susan S. Lederman
 Richard C. Leone
 Charles J. Maikish
 Joseph J. Maraziti, Jr.
 John L. McGoldrick
 The Very Reverend
 James Parks Morton
 Peter H. Nachtwey
 Jan Nicholson
 James S. Polshek
 Richard Ravitch

Gregg Rechler
 Robert N. Rich
 Mark F. Rockefeller
 Elizabeth Barlow Rogers
 Janette Sadik-Khan
 Stevan A. Sandberg
 H. Claude Shostal
 Susan L. Solomon
 Luther Tai
 Karen E. Wagner
 Mary Ann Werner
 Paul T. Williams Jr.
 William M. Yaro